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GAO Defense Reconnaisance  
Data Report  
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: George L. Cary, Legislative Counsel

SUBJECT: Intelligence Information Provided to the  
General Accounting Office

25X1 1. ☐ Action Requested: None; for information only.

25X1 2. ☐ Background: Perhaps it is stating the obvious, but our two recent experiences with the General Accounting Office (GAO) with regard to the AWACS letter and the GAO representatives' attempt to talk with West German officials regarding overhead reconnaissance programs, point up sharply the problems that can arise when we deal with the GAO on the assumption that it is operating at the specific behest of the Congress. I see no problem in our providing limited background intelligence briefings on various topics to the GAO and its staff, but it seems to me that if there is a legitimate interest in intelligence on a particular subject by the Congress this requirement can best be filled by direct contact with the committees of Congress concerned.

25X1 3. ☐ While the GAO was established as a creature of the Congress, we have frequently found that, as in the case of the NRO inquiry, its investigations are "self-initiated." It is vital that the Congress receive intelligence information directly from the source, i. e., the DCI or his authorized representative or the agency authorized by him to respond, not through a third agency as the GAO or the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

25X1 4. ☐ On a number of occasions GAO has queried us on a particular subject, presumably on behalf of the Congress. When we have checked back with the congressional entity involved, we have found that no such request was made to GAO, at least insofar as intelligence information was concerned. There is in fact a feeling on the Hill that organizations like the GAO and the CBO, which supposedly respond to requirements from the Congress, are generating requirements on their own and in fact competing with the Congress in many areas. I would suggest, therefore, that when a request is made by the GAO or the CBO in the future, we determine the origin of that request and deal with the congressional element which may have or allegedly has generated it. Routine background intelligence briefings are an exception to the rule.

George L. Cary

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